

E. Paul Torrance: I Called Him Ghandi 2

by Kathy Goff, EdD

I first became acquainted with E. Paul Torrance's work in 1984 in an extension course called "Creativity for Teachers." The text was *The Search for Satori and Creativity*. This book was about his creativity assessments and how they measured strengths. This meant that you could only add points, not lose points, on the tests. This resonated so strongly with me that I focused my masters thesis on creativity and decided to go to the University of Georgia to study at the Torrance Center for Creative Studies and pursue a doctorate in 1987.

Upon arriving in Athens, Georgia, I found that Dr. Torrance had retired and was working out of his home. I met him within 2 weeks of arriving. He called me the next day to hire me to evaluate his assessment, *Sounds and Images*. I continued to work for Dr. Torrance daily as his personal research assistant for the next four years. Upon completion of my doctorate in 1991, we continued to work together and correspond weekly until his passing in 2003.

E. Paul Torrance was a tireless advocate for creativity and the creative potentials of all people of all ages and abilities. He was brilliant. One assignment was to fill ninety-two 8 ½ x 11" photo albums with photos from his lifelong research. He remembered every person in every photo, even teachers and students who participated in his research. He must have created a ninety-third album.

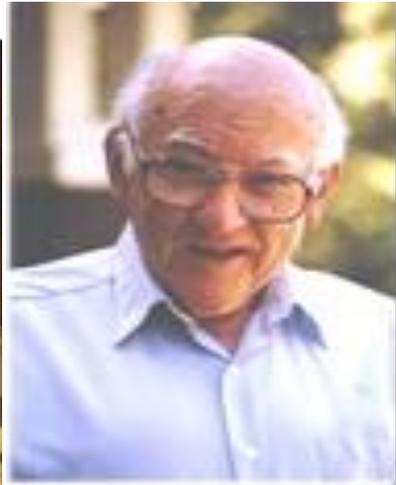


Torrance chose to define creativity as a process because he thought if we understood the creative process, we could predict what kind of person could master the process, what kind of climate made it grow and what products would be involved. He created a battery of tests of creative thinking abilities for use from kindergarten through graduate school.

The *Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking* (TTCT) (1966) are the most widely used tests of creative talents in the world and have been translated into over 50 languages. His longitudinal studies (1958-2008) are the longest running studies of creativity to date. He found that creative growth seems to be greatest and most predictable when deliberate, direct teaching of creative thinking skills is involved. Torrance believed that each person is unique and has particular strengths that are of value and must be respected.

Torrance extended his work to older adults when we studied their creativity from 1989-1991. We continued this line of research which resulted in the creation of the *Abbreviated Torrance Tests for Adults* (ATTA) in 2000. I have continued our research into the creativity of adults and am currently involved in developing a cloud-based creativity assessment called the VCAI (*Vast Creative Abilities Indicator*) (www.vastlearningsystems.com).

E. Paul Torrance was my mentor, colleague and friend. He was playful, intelligent, positive, humble, hard working, fun loving and very spiritual. I called him “Ghandi 2.”



Kathy Goff is Director of the Oklahoma Torrance Center for Creativity. She and Dr. E. Paul Torrance worked together for over 16 years. Goff and Torrance created the Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults (ATTA), one of the first instruments to measure creativity in adults. Kathy is co-founder and chief creative officer of Vast Learning Systems, a cloud-based edtech software company that focuses on creativity assessments and brain trainings. She is an internationally recognized author, researcher, educator, patented inventor and entrepreneur.